1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lupata, and the Saka arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we know nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abantu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Ponde. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafwile*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 25), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafwile*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*, that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation, and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason *ifumu* was rendered by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 9 (1935), and other papers, but this rendering has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 198).